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ABSTRACT

These three papers are from a symposium on professional journals that was facilitated by Wim J. Nijhoff at the 1995 Academy of Human Resource Development (HRD) conference. "Advancing the Profession through Journals: The Editor-Author-Profession Partnership" (Gary N. McLean) describes the purpose and operation of the "Human Resource Development Quarterly," which was established in 1990 to provide a medium to foster the development of a community from a multidisciplinary group of HRD professionals. "Advancing the Profession through Journals: The PIQ Perspective" (Boyd Richards, Bill Coscarelli) reviews the experience of the editors of the "Performance Improvement Quarterly" during its first 7 years and focuses on the issues of ensuring the merit and worth of submitted manuscripts and maximizing the journal's influence on an emerging field. "'Adult Education Quarterly': A Forum for Research and Theory in Human Resource Development?" (Sean Courtney, John M. Dirks) positions the "Adult Education Quarterly" within the fields of adult education and human resource development, provides an overview of guidelines for preparing and submitting manuscripts for publication, describes the process used to review manuscripts, provides a profile of submitted manuscripts within a given year, and reflects on the future of research and publications in the field. (KC)

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ACADEMY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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[21] **ADVANCING THE PROFESSION THROUGH JOURNALS: The Editor-Author-Profession Partnership**

Facilitator: Wim J. Nijhof, University of Twente (The Netherlands)
Human Resource Development Quarterly
Gary N. McLean, Editor
Performance Improvement Quarterly
Boyd Richards & William Coscarelli, Editors
Adult Education Quarterly
Sean T. Courtney & John Dirkx, Editors

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Advancing the Profession through Journals: The Editor-Author-Profession Partnership

Gary N. McLean, University of Minnesota, St. Paul
Editor, Human Resource Development Quarterly

The Human Resource Development Quarterly was first published in Spring, 1990, and is now in its sixth volume. A primary purpose of the journal is to provide a medium to foster the development of a community from a multi-disciplinary group of human resource development professionals. The format of the journal has been designed to provide opportunities for publication for authors from a wide range of field backgrounds, research methodologies, experience levels, and foci. Acceptance rate is running about 35%. Suggestions are made to potential authors to enhance the possibility of their having their manuscripts accepted for publication.

Spring, 1990; Volume 1, Number 1. The Human Resource Development Quarterly (HRDQ), after a long gestation period, was birthed. As acknowledged by its first editor, Richard A. Swanson of the University of Minnesota, from the beginning the HRDQ was a model of partnering. From lengthy and difficult discussions in the Research Committee of the American Society of Training and Development to fun, creative, and challenging exchanges in the conference room of the (then) Training and Development program at the University of Minnesota; from negotiations with ASTD as a potential sponsor to Jossey-Bass as a potential publisher to the University of Minnesota as a potential home--all were part of the labor pains and joyful celebration upon its birth.

Swanson (1990) acknowledged those who partnered in this process in his first editorial:

> Early champions of HRDQ included the chairs of the research committee, David Miller, Ivan Charner, Michael D. Mireau, and Neal E. Chalofsky; ASTD staff Curtis E. Plott, executive vice-president, and Nancy Olson, director of publications; and Jossey-Bass's president, Steven Piersanti. The current champions include Gary N. McLean, associate editor, and Sandra J. Johnson, assistant to the editor, the distinguished editorial board, the scores of expert reviewers, and the corporate sponsors. (p. 2)

Today, of course, Ron Jacobs, associate editor, and Maria Hruby, assistant, The Ohio State University; Peter Fish (formerly managing co-editor), and Barbara Benassi and Rebecca Johnson, current managing co-editors, University of Minnesota, have joined this core of champions, along with new players in Jossey-Bass and the Research Committee of ASTD.

Purpose

Again, in the first issue, Swanson (1990) described a vision for the role that the HRDQ could play:

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> Many of us see HRDQ as the start of a community of HRD scholars. I believe this research quarterly will provide the intellectual footing and research credibility HRD requires to mature as a field of study and practice. (p. 2)

Swanson goes on to describe the eclectic nature of the HRD field, coming as it does from such diverse backgrounds. The hope of the early champions was that the HRDQ would serve as a venue for a wide range of backgrounds committed to HRD, whose publications previously appeared in the foundational areas of expertise of the authors but were then not widely available to others in the HRD field. Experience has borne this out. Authors have come from adult education, vocational education, mineral engineering management, public administration, management, political science, labor education, industrial relations, and many more. Not only that, but practitioners and consultants, in addition to academics, have authored articles.

Another form of inclusiveness to which HRDQ has been committed has been to provide outlets for both quantitative and qualitative research (as imperfect as these descriptors might be) and to integrate the philosophies of human development and human capital.

How successful have we been in meeting these specific diversity objectives? Approaching our 300th manuscript, we have not yet had a manuscript for which there has been a unanimous recommendation (from 4 or 5 reviewers) on acceptance category (accept as is, accept with minor revisions, accept with major revisions). In fact, we have had only a handful of recommendations for which there has been unanimity around acceptance, regardless of the acceptance category. Having read every one of these manuscripts, it is my opinion that the reviewers, who represent a broad perspective of the fields undergirding HRD, who have expertise in different types of research, and who have different philosophical bases are, in fact, as we all are, trapped by the value systems and assumptions that we make, in this case specifically related to research.

So, have we succeeded in meeting our initial purpose? I believe that we have taken the right beginning steps, and, further, I believe that the HRDQ played at least a small role, along with many others, of course, in the establishment of the Academy of Human Resource Development and, thus, this meeting. For as the opportunities for fields to talk with one another grew, and as we discovered the synergy that come from the interchanges made possible through the HRDQ, we began to look for other opportunities to carry out the implementation of such a community. Even as we struggled in the HRDQ to find adequate ways to reflect research and practice interests (through, for example, the Refereed section and the Forum section), so, too, do we see the Academy continuing to struggle to answer the dilemma of what some perceive to be a dichotomy between theory (research) and practice.

With other fine journals around, has there been a need for the HRDQ? That's difficult to measure. We have had a good flow of manuscripts, but obtaining the quality desired has not been as easy. Yet, we believe that we have not had to compromise on quality, and halfway through six volumes, we have met our page length goals and have submitted manuscript to the publisher (close to) on time. Thus, there does appear to be a need for this outlet for authors. Another way to view this question is through subscription data. At present (as of December, 1994), there are 1,745 subscribers, 68% of whom are individuals, with others being libraries, corporations, and academic departments.

Another objective that has never been stated explicitly, but has clearly been met, has been to provide an outlet for advanced graduate students' work. While media (books, software, video) reviews have been primary outlets, even including instructor assignments from which one or two might be of sufficient quality for publication, advanced graduate student authors have made significant contributions to the forum and even the refereed sections of the journal.

Format

From the beginning, the format of the journal has remained the same:

- a feature article, with one or two invited responses, with the opportunity for the feature article author to respond
- refereed articles, usually three
- forum section, which includes non-refereed articles that are designed to explore controversial concepts within the field, challenge existing theory, suggest research hypotheses that have not yet been tested, responses to articles published earlier, and so on
- media reviews, including materials that might not fall obviously into human resource development, such as research, economics, and future studies, for example

It is not always easy to stay with this format. Getting the right mix of manuscripts in time to assemble an issue requires lots of coordination, hard work, and just plain luck! The most difficult task, for me, has been identifying an appropriate feature article in sufficient time to identify invited reaction authors, and it has been even more problematic to get the reactions to the feature author for a "final word."

At the present time, a customer survey is being undertaken by Jossey-Bass to determine reactions of subscribers to the journal and the reasons for non-renewal. Out of this process we hope to find ways to improve the journal, though, at present, there is little evidence that this format will change very dramatically.

Partnering

In my editorial for the first issue of this year (McLean, 1995), "Partnering in Human Resource Development," I underscored the importance of a broad range of partnerships for the HRD field. I point to the role that many people in HRD have played in implementing continuous quality improvement. I pointed to "an underlying premise of most CQI theories is that cooperation is preferred over competition (e.g., Kohn, 1994)" (McLean, 1995, p. 1).

In his editorial, Jacobs (1994) examined the manuscripts published in the first four volumes of the journal. He found that about 18% of published articles were coauthored between academics and practitioners. While finding that to be an encouraging number, he called for more such collaboration.

Historically, there has been a good partnership working to support potential authors, though such assistance is not always understood nor appreciated by the authors. One way in which this occurs is in referring authors to other journals that the editors deem to be more appropriate for a manuscript that has been deemed inappropriate for the HRDQ. Manuscripts, for example, are frequently referred to and from Training and Development, the practitioner-oriented journal of ASTD. Further, the format of HRDQ has enabled us to work with authors whose articles are not accepted for publication in the refereed section to prepare a manuscript that can be published in the forum section. Most authors are disappointed that they have not been accepted for publication in the referred section, but they seem pleased to at least have an opportunity for publication.

Our acceptance/rejection figures also support our commitment to partnering with our authors. Table 1 shows the disposition of submitted manuscripts during the first four years of operation. Only 4% of manuscripts were accepted without revision. Most authors accept suggestions for revision gracefully, some thankfully. Occasionally, authors see such feedback as coming from an adversarial relationship. Unfortunately, sometimes reviewers use language that creates this feeling. As reviewers are seasoned researchers, they sometimes forget how difficult and painful the journey towards competence in conducting and reporting research can be. We try hard to communicate concerns while avoiding judgments that carry personal connotations.

Some authors do not understand nor appreciate the ambiguity that lies behind decisions related to publication. I stated earlier how seldom it is that we obtain a unanimous recommendation from reviewers. It should come as no surprise, then, that reviewers make very

different, and sometimes contradictory, recommendations for improvement. This can even be the case around something that is as "objective" as the statistical test to be used or the method of presenting the statistical data. That's just not the world we live in. So there is constant tension between being prescriptive (thus removing the ambiguity) and encouraging (by presenting the range of feedback obtained and letting the author figure out what to improve and what to ignore).

Table 1
Outcome of Manuscripts Submitted to HRDQ, 1990-1994

Action	No. of Articles	Percent
Submitted	218	100
Rejected	106	49
Accepted without revision	9	4
Accepted after revision	66	30
Revisions requested, but not yet received	19	6
Currently under review	15	7
Submitted for refereed review, but accepted for Forum section	3	1

(McLean, 1994, p. 2)

A review of this table suggests the extent of the desire to partner with authors. A rejection rate of 49% is relatively low for a scholarly journal. Yet the quality of articles published remains high. I believe this is a reflection of the high degree of partnership that exists among reviewers, editors, and authors. In fact, when evaluating reviewers to determine their continuing presence on the reviewers' panel, we look closely at the quality of the assistance that is provided to authors for the improvement of their manuscripts. We also follow up on the telephone with those manuscripts for which revisions have been requested, but no revised manuscript has been received. Such verbal and personal encouragement almost always produces a quality manuscript that is subsequently published.

What are some other partnership arrangements? We provide books to potential reviewers for review. Potential reviewers have not always held up their end of the agreement. We find that almost 75% of those requesting books to review never submit a review (and, of course, retain the book). Further, perhaps because reviews do not carry the weight of an article in promotion and tenure considerations, review authors seem much less willing, by and large, to work at improving their reviews to meet publication criteria. Further, we have provided multiple copies of our author guidelines to faculty members for use with classes.

Partnerships between professional organizations and the HRDQ have also marked our history. As already identified, ASTD played a very important role in the formation of the journal, and it continues to play an important role in our ongoing existence. We have been very successful in recruiting authors and reviewers from many different professional organizations, including ASTD Professors' Network, AHRD, National Society for Performance and Instruction (NSPI), the Organization Development Institute, the Organization Development Network, Academy of Management, and many others. Clearly, any professional journal must be closely connected to its field, and professional organizations are good connection to the field. As indicated earlier, however, the diversity of the backgrounds of the people in the HRD field makes it difficult to identify even two or three organizations that are likely to represent the field adequately.

How Can Authors Increase the Possibility of Publication?

Every manuscript has its own idiosyncrasies. Having said that, however, there are definitively things authors can do to improve the odds of having their manuscript selected. Based on my review of almost 300 manuscripts submitted to the Human Resource Development Quarterly, and at least 100 more as Executive and Consulting Editor for the Journal of Education for Business, here are the most frequently occurring problems faced by authors. Some are easily remedied; others are more difficult.

1. Use the format specified by the journal, no matter how inappropriate you believe them to be or however unfamiliar you may be with the style. HRDQ requires the use of the fourth edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association, 1994). It has been quite amazing to me how many authors totally ignore this requirement. When manuscripts are returned to be put into this format, the revisions often come back incorrectly using the specified style. It is difficult to believe that authors actually think that editors will do this for them.
2. Have your article edited by someone with excellent writing skills, even if you have to pay for it. Often, we receive reviews back from reviewers with negative recommendations for publication, yet the comments made hardly address content. The writing is often so poor that reviewers are not able to see past the poor writing.
3. Review guidelines before submitting the article. How many copies are required? (We require six.) Who are the copies to be sent to? (We want them sent to the editor.) What is required to insure a "blind" review? (We request a separate title page that can be removed prior to blind review, and all references to "my work" or any other internal references that would provide clues of authorship must be removed.) Failure to follow these guidelines can add measurably to the time required for the review process.
4. Make the relevance to HRD clear and explicit. Our experience is that we receive many manuscripts that are implicitly appropriate for publication in the HRDQ, but the authors leave it up to the reviewers, and ultimately the readers, to make the connection. We want such connections to be explicit.
5. Describe methodology completely. Readers should not be left guessing about what was done or why it was done. This section doesn't have to be lengthy, it just has to be complete.
6. Avoid the formalities of a dissertation. Over the years, traditions have developed about the format and structure of a dissertation. Because most graduate students do not get the experience of writing for publication, their own model for writing continues to be the dissertation. Such structure is not appropriate for a published article. Potential authors are, hopefully, subjected to reading lots of journal articles. These should be examined prior to writing for publication. As just one example, hardly ever are hypotheses listed in a journal article as they often are in dissertations.
7. Be internally consistent with the methodology of your study. If your methods section indicates that certain steps were followed, the reader should legitimately expect that the findings would reflect these steps. If a qualitative study is described, then one should expect to see this methodology carried out throughout the article.
8. If your study is positivistic, and you are wanting to generalize your findings, be sure that the population is defined, your sampling is described, and your sample is adequate. Response rate also has to be adequate, or the burden of the argument is on you to make the case for its acceptability.

9. In positivistic studies, you must provide reliability and validity data. These are not optional requirements; they are essential in supporting the appropriateness of the findings presented.
10. If your manuscript includes statistical analyses, provide a computer disk of your raw data. All of our statistical manuscripts are reviewed by our statistical editor, Dave Passmore from The Pennsylvania State University. If a computer disk is available, assumptions behind the statistical tests can be checked and alternatives explored. If the disk is not available, long, complex letters may be required, and both parties may be left discontented with the results.
11. A qualitative study is not an excuse for a lack of vigor. In some ways, there is still a struggle going on about what criteria to use in evaluating a study that does not use traditional positivistic approaches. Our experience with reviewers, however, is that there is a general feel that qualitative articles do not generally meet quality standards--not because qualitative articles are less acceptable for publication (they aren't), but because the same rigor is often not applied.

Where Do We Go from Here?

A journal that has just completed five volumes is still an infant in the field of publishing. The Human Resource Development Quarterly is still maturing, looking for ways to improve on a continuous basis, with the commitment to being a good partner--with academicians, with practitioners, with professional organizations, and with organizations needing to be aware of cutting edge research. I would be pleased to receive feedback that will help us do this. And our editorial staff is available to talk with you about your volunteering as a reviewer or as an author.

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Advancing the Profession Through Journals: The *PIQ* Perspective

Boyd Richards and Bill Coscarelli
Current and Past Editors, *Performance Improvement Quarterly*

In this article, we review our experience as editors during the first seven years of PIQ to deal with issues directly related to the editor-author-profession partnership. We position this review in the context of a model representing sources of influence on editorial decision making. We focus our discussion on two issues: ensuring the merit and worth of submitted manuscripts and maximizing the journal's influence on an emergent field.

In the winter of 1988, *PIQ* began "a venture [to] define and shape the field" of human performance technology. With its first issue, the journal established its mission:

> *PIQ* is a peer reviewed journal addressed to professionals in the practice of human performance technology and its related disciplines. It is primarily, though not exclusively, interested in the performance of adults in organizations. *PIQ* is designed to provide leadership in defining and describing the field of human performance technology. It will seek to provide continuing education to professionals in the field who are looking for sophisticated discussion of the issues they face. While scholarly in philosophy, the editorial style will be more conversational than traditional scholarly journals—without giving up the rigor of discipline in inquiry. (Coscarelli, 1988; p. 2)

Florida State University and The National Society for Performance and Instruction need to be commended for their insightful commitment to the field of human performance technology that led them to initiate such a venture.

Seven years later the venture continues. The mission, goals, and editorial style have remained essentially unchanged through the transition of editors, turnover in the editorial board, and ongoing evolution of the field. The venture, thus far, has taken us about where we expected to be. Subscriptions gradually increased, more and more authors have submitted manuscripts, and we have earned an invitation from Richard Swanson for the "prestigious *Performance Improvement Quarterly* [to] participate in [this] symposium" (Swanson, 1994). We suspect that the path we have followed on our venture has had many of the same milestones and junctions as other professional journals. We have had to setup, maintain and work with an editorial board of busy professional volunteers. We have had to struggle to find enough quality manuscripts to fill an issue and get it printed on time. We have had to make tough decisions about accepting and rejecting manuscripts which were produced only after hundreds of hours of hard work. And we have had to position and promote ourselves in a marketplace of thousands of journals, all struggling to gain a large enough readership to pay for their existence.

This article briefly summarizes our experience during our 7-year venture to make *PIQ* what it is today. Specifically, we discuss two key issues regarding the editor-author-profession partnership. These issues are: 1)How do we ensure the merit and worth of

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submitted manuscripts? and 2) How does a journal like *PIQ* have the most influence in an emergent field?

A Model

Central to our discussion of these issues is our model of the editor-author-profession partnership. As shown in Figure 1, we define the field as all individuals who intentionally apply principles of human performance technology. While we will use words like professionals and profession to describe this set of individuals, we acknowledge that from a technical standpoint this usage may be inaccurate. The field is really a collection of practitioners with different backgrounds who have received different types of training, who face no formal certification or licensure requirements, and who perform a wide diversity of functions. We seek to influence these practitioners by publishing meritorious manuscripts of immediate and long-term value. The arrows in the figure represent the pattern of influence between the field, authors, and editorial board and between the authors, editorial board, editorial policy, and the editor inherent in the publishing process practiced by *PIQ*.

Underlying this model is an assumption that readers in a field want and benefit from an external review process that eliminate all but the most important and best qualified manuscripts for them to read. This assumption places on representatives of the field (the editorial staff) the right to make choices on behalf of the greater good of all members of the field. The quality of such journals, therefore, is based entirely on two sets of choices: 1) choices authors make when writing manuscripts which affect the merit and worth of their submissions and 2) the choices the editorial staff makes about accepting or rejecting the authors' works. If authors do not submit technically well-written, interesting manuscripts, the editorial staff is left without meaningful choices and the quality of the journal suffers. On the other hand, if the editor and editorial board make poor choices about what's good for the field, and rejects good manuscripts, or requires inappropriate revisions to manuscripts, the quality of the journal also suffers. Only through a partnership of making good choices by means of an effective editorial process can a journal properly achieve its stature as a source of influence in the field.

Issue 1: Merit versus Worth

There are essentially two ways manuscripts get into *PIQ*. The first, and most frequent, is for unsolicited manuscripts to be accepted after a rigorous peer review process. The second is for solicited manuscripts to be included as part of a "special issue" designed around carefully chosen themes. The first path to being published maximizes the choices of authors. Based on perceived trends, issues, and "publishable topics" authors initiate the demanding process of preparing manuscripts that have merit and worth (i.e., meets editorial standards of excellence and makes a meaningful contribution to the field). In order for authors to be willing to take this step, they must believe that they have a probability of success (i.e., that their work will prove acceptable to the editorial staff).

From an editor's perspective, therefore, we have a responsibility to create an accessible open forum that will attract authors from a diversity of backgrounds and experience. That forum needs to be founded on clear standards of excellence but also needs to be flexible enough to entice new researchers and non-academic practitioners to attempt a contribution. In the early days of *PIQ*, we gladly compromised standards of merit a little to simply have sufficient manuscripts to fill an issue, making the journal, in comparison to more established journals, a relatively easy path to publication. But too much compromise of the standards would have damned the journal to a life of second-rate stature. In time, as *PIQ*'s reputation has grown, and as more authors have chosen to submit manuscripts, generally less compromise has been needed or desired. In 1991, for example, less than 30 manuscripts were submitted while in 1994 we have received over 50. As a consequence, our editorial choices have become very different. The principle question is no longer "Do I need this article to complete the issue?", but "Do I have room for this article or should I hold room for better qualified manuscripts?"

However, technical merit is not all that counts. We still feel an obligation to go easy on manuscripts that are particularly innovative or deal with difficult issues that would not have otherwise been represented. We sometimes treat manuscripts from business and industry a little less rigorously than from academia--in order to make *PIQ* equally accessible to practitioners with less time for writing. Both groups of authors have good ideas, need to be heard, and ought to have access to the forum of influence. These tradeoffs are not easily dealt with and don't always produce desired results. For example, we received a worthwhile manuscript written by a practitioner in a well-known

training organization. The peer reviewers agreed with the manuscript's worth but made strong recommendations for improving its merit; it needed to be shortened and better focused. We accepted the manuscript pending revision. However, the author chose not to make the revisions--claiming insufficient time. Writing manuscripts was not part of his job description and not rewarded by his institution. We even offered to require fewer revisions, but to no avail. The manuscript has never been published. Thus, a useful piece of information is not in the literature.

The second path to being published, contributing to a special issue, maximizes the choices of the editorial staff. The editorial staff identifies topics, selects guest editors, approves authors, and can enforce editorial policy. Authors are more likely to write manuscripts because their acceptance are all but assured.

The tradeoff, however, is almost always between merit and worth. The worth, or value of manuscripts is enhanced because authors are typically selected because of their good ideas or innovative practices. On the other hand, merit is often sacrificed because the implied agreement between the editorial staff and invited authors makes it very difficult to reject submitted manuscripts or to mandate revisions.

Which path to publishing is better? Which allows *PIQ* the greatest opportunity to influence the field? Which allows authors the greatest opportunity to make a meaningful contribution? These questions lead nicely into a discussion of the next issue.

Issue 2: How does a journal like *PIQ* have the most influence in an emergent field?

The National Society of Performance and Instruction is in a state of transition, as it always has been since its conception. The society started out as a group of scholars interested in programmed instruction. It later evolved to include a broader focus on all of instructional design. The society is currently shifting to an even more broad focus -- all of human performance technology. As a journal sponsored by the society, *PIQ* has struggled to match its pace of reform with that of the society. We have had to find a balance in our editorial choices between promoting new technologies and helping to incrementally advance instructional design. A couple of years ago, we did a content analysis of the journal and found that about half of the articles dealt specifically with training or instructional design topics while the other half dealt with a broader variety of performance interventions (e.g., organizational redesign, performance support systems).

At first, almost the entire readership of *PIQ* were practitioners grounded in instructional design (ID). Our strategy was to attract readers with an ID background without becoming an ID journal. In time we have also sought to attract readers with the broader interests of performance technology without abandoning our ID readership. This schizophrenic existence has made it challenging to make choices about where, when and how to influence the field.

If *PIQ* were to rely exclusively on unsolicited manuscripts, its opportunity to influence the field would be limited to 1) its effect on the decisions of potential authors to write a manuscript and submit it to the journal and 2) its editorial choices of accepting manuscripts and requiring revision prior to publication. Both of these sources of influence are indirect and rely on the authors' commitment to the field by producing quality work. To achieve its mission thus far, *PIQ* has been fortunate to work with authors who have caught the spirit Swanson (1988) described in the journal's first issue:

> The R&D process requires levels of curiosity, discipline, and rigor not required of regular work...The product is new knowledge and understandings...produced

> in small increments...that often are publicly attacked on the grounds of fuddy-duddyism and foolishness...[because] the link between the smaller research projects and the larger solutions escapes casual observers. The motivation to conduct R&D is a desire for progress by challenging the fads, myths, and assumptions that surround the complex issues of human learning and productivity. (p. 70)

PIQ has chosen not to rely exclusively on unsolicited manuscripts. Instead, it has regularly featured special issues. Topics for these issues have included: "Emerging Information Technologies", "Case Studies", "HPT in Public Education", "Training and Development in the Nuclear Power Industry", "Total Quality Systems", "Designing for Performance", "Performance Support Systems", and "The Changing Role of HPT". With special issues, *PIQ* potentially has more direct influence. By establishing the topic, identifying the guest editor and selecting authors, the journal can address concerns of the field in a timely and targeted manner. We can overtly control the balance given to instructional issues as compared to broader performance issues. We can give authors doing "cutting edge" work the chance to put forth their ideas and experience quickly and directly.

The advantages of special issues, however, don't come without a price. As the number of special issues increase, the space available for unsolicited manuscripts decreases, thus potentially discouraging authors from submitting them to *PIQ*. This may create lost opportunity to publish influential manuscripts that may not otherwise make it to print. The other tradeoff tends to be merit. Generally speaking, manuscripts submitted for special issues are not as well written. Authors usually feel they are doing the guest editor a favor and realize that they will not have to face the competitive peer review process. For example, in all of the special issues published to date, we can think of only a couple of manuscripts that were rejected due to their technical merit.

Conclusion

Publishing in a refereed journal is a partnership between the editor, editorial board, authors, and the members of the profession. The influence of the partners in this relationship flows in an established pattern (Figure 1) and is manifested in the quality of the choices the authors and editors make throughout the publishing process. This paper addressed two issues important to *PIQ* relative to these choices and their subsequent outcomes. The first issue deals with editors' choices that require striking a balance between merit (technical quality) and worth (value) of submitted manuscripts. In order to have influence in our emergent field of human performance technology, *PIQ* has relied on authors to invest the time and energy necessary to write scholarly articles. However, it has also been willing to compromise its desired high standards in order to nurture participation in the publishing process by nontraditional authors. The second issue deals with the authors' and editors' choices regarding solicited and unsolicited manuscripts. Again, *PIQ* has had to strike a balance between the two routes to publishing so that potential authors are attracted to *PIQ* because of the probability of successful publication and so that specific, important and timely topics can be addressed. Only time will tell whether the balances achieved thus far enable *PIQ* to help advance the profession and fulfill its part of the editor-author-profession partnership.

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Adult Education Quarterly: A Forum for Research and Theory in Human Resource Development?

Sean Courtney and John M. Dirkx
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

In this article we position Adult Education Quarterly (AEQ) within the fields of adult education and Human Resource Development, provide an overview of guidelines for preparing and submitting a manuscript for publication, describe the process used to review manuscripts, provide a profile of submitted manuscripts within a given year, and reflect on the future of research and publications in our respective fields.

Researchers and scholars in Human Resource Development are able to select from a number of publications that can be potentially used to disseminate their work. Knowledge of the scope and requirements of the journal being considered will significantly influence success in publication. The purpose of this article is to familiarize the reader with the scope of *Adult Education Quarterly* (AEQ), kinds of articles that are published in this journal, how it relates to the field of HRD and other journals in adult education, its editorial policies and guidelines, and how its current editors view the future of research within the fields of HRD and adult education. The views that are expressed in this article reflect those of the current editors and not necessarily the field as a whole or *AEQ*'s sponsoring agency.

Background of the Journal

The journal was originally founded in 1929 as *The Journal of Adult Education* but the name was changed in 1983 to *Adult Education Quarterly (AEQ)*. In its more formative years, the journal sported many opinion and descriptive pieces, the thoughts of leading adult educators, musings on the growth and direction of the nascent discipline called "adult education", and the first glimmerings of theory and research. Over the years, various comparative surveys of the journal have noted the trends and themes of most interest to authors and researchers. At one time Roger DeCrow, who oversaw the publishing of adult education materials for ERIC, used to produce a directory of publications which appeared in at least one issue of the journal every year. In time, the journal increasingly emphasized research and theory within the field of adult and continuing education. Currently, this emphasis represents the primary focus of *AEQ*.

AEQ represents one of a number of publications throughout the world that are devoted to issues related to adult learning. The journal enjoys the reputation of being the premier North American research journal representing the field of adult education, and is one of only a handful of journals in the world dedicated to research and theory in adult and continuing education. Journals such as *Convergence*, the *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, and *Studies in Continuing Education* represent the international reach of research and theory in the field. *AEQ* is also a frequent outlet for adult education scholars across the globe. The continuing learning of adults is, however, also of concern to the professions. It is not uncommon to find related journals, such as the *Journal of Nursing Continuing Education*, addressing the subject of adult learning. Other journals, such as *Adult Learning*, deal more directly with and attempt to specifically address practitioner concerns. Scholars within the field of HRD who are concerned with matters of theory and research impacting the adult as learner can find publishing outlets in many educationally-based journals here in the United States, in Canada, and abroad. Insofar as the field of adult education can be judged to include issues around training and settings which

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include business and industry. AEQ has over the years reflected in its pages theory and research of an HRD nature.

Editorial Policy

Adult Education Quarterly (AEQ) is committed to the dissemination of knowledge derived from disciplined inquiry in the field of adult and continuing education. With a circulation of about 5000, *AEQ* is published January, April, July, and October, under the sponsorship of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE). *AEQ* publishes articles representing a broad range of methodological approaches, including: a) empirical studies which use critical, action, participatory, experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, descriptive, historical, philosophical, qualitative, or interpretive methods; b) theory-building articles; c) interpretive reviews of the literature (position statements or reasoned critiques of articles previously printed in *Adult Education Quarterly*); d) essay reviews (commissioned by editors); and e) book reviews.

Three broad criteria are used in the review and selection process. First, articles must be important in that they significantly advance knowledge and theory. Second, all material must be accurate and technically sound. Finally, articles must be well crafted; that is, they must be clear and well organized. In preparing a manuscript for submission, authors are encouraged to consider the following strategies:

1) Study the Editorial Policy and its sections on guidelines to insure that your manuscript falls within the scope of the journal and will meet stylistic requirements.

2) Consider the Review Criteria (Section E of the Editorial Policy) in developing and crafting your manuscript.

3) Study back issues of *AEQ* and its predecessor, *Adult Education*, focusing especially on articles of purpose and form similar to your manuscript.

4) Ask at least two colleagues who are objective and honest in their appraisals to critically review the manuscript before submitting it to *AEQ*.

Manuscripts submitted to *Adult Education Quarterly* must be grammatically correct and stylistically consistent. The journal uses the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), Fourth Edition. Potential authors should consult this publication for rules governing references and citations as well as other elements of grammar and style. All manuscripts need to be typed, double-spaced and the author(s) need to submit four copies, retaining a copy for their own files. The editors are not responsible for returning copies to authors. Articles generally should not exceed 5000 words, including charts, tables and bibliography. Potential authors are strongly encouraged to obtain and follow Editorial Policy Guidelines for specific information on technical requirements for manuscript preparation.

Manuscript Review Procedures All manuscripts submitted for consideration for publication in *AEQ* are subjected to a systematic review process. The manuscript is first examined to determine if it conforms to the editorial guidelines for the journal (i.e. if it is "in scope"). Manuscripts considered to be "out of scope" are returned to the author(s) with a brief cover letter explaining that they are not acceptable for publication by *AEQ* in their present form and no further review of the manuscript is conducted. Manuscripts determined to be "in scope", as defined in the "guidelines for contributors" (see attachment), are submitted for further review to a panel of consulting editors (CE). Typically, three individuals from this panel are selected to review each manuscript, based on background expertise and knowledge. Decisions as to who will be asked to review the manuscript are made on the basis of the nature of the research question or topic of the manuscript, the nature of the methodology employed, and the availability of CEs. The review process is "double blind," meaning the CEs do not know the identity of the author(s) and the author(s) do not know the identities of the reviewers. CEs are requested to return their reviews within five weeks of the date in which it is sent out. CEs who have not returned their reviews with this time are contacted and requested to complete their reviews as soon as possible. In the

event that a particular CE cannot complete the review within this time frame, another CE may be selected for the manuscript in question.

After all reviews have been returned to *AEQ*, they are examined by the editors and final determinations of a) Accept, b) Conditionally Accept, c) Reject and Encourage resubmission, or d) Reject are made, based on the information provided by the CEs. Final decisions on each manuscript are made by the editors of *AEQ*. Letters are then prepared informing the author(s) of the editors' decision. For manuscripts falling into categories (c) or (d), *AEQ* has no further obligation to the authors. The authors are free to re-submit revised manuscripts but they are informed that these submissions will be subjected to a new full review process. Manuscripts falling into category (a) are, for the most part, ready to publish "as is," with little if any revisions required. Manuscripts falling into the "Conditionally Accept" category require at least some revision before they will be fully accepted for publication. The conditions that must be met before this happens are carefully detailed in cover letters to the authors of these manuscripts. These letters clearly specify that the manuscript will not be published until these conditions have been met to the satisfaction of the editors. In some instances, the revised manuscript may be sent to one or more of the CEs who initially reviewed it for their feedback. When the conditions have been satisfied the authors are informed by letter that the manuscript is now ready for publication.

When a manuscript is accepted, the author will be notified and informed about the next steps in the publication process. To expedite the editing and publishing process, authors of accepted manuscripts will be asked to provide their final version on IBM-compatible or Macintosh floppy disks. Manuscripts produced using WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS or Microsoft Word 4.0 through 5.1 for Macintosh are preferred.

Manuscripts submitted to *Adult Education Quarterly* should not be under consideration for publication by any other journals, nor should they have been published previously in any form (see "Warrant Statement" in Section C). A paper may, however, have been presented at a meeting or conference. In such cases the author should state where and when such a paper was presented. After acceptance, a paper may not be published elsewhere without written permission from AAACE.

Review Criteria The following are used to review research papers submitted to *Adult Education Quarterly*:

1) *Importance of the Problem*. A problem or subject addressed by a manuscript should contribute to knowledge or theory pertinent to adult and continuing education. Importance is enhanced when a paper promotes understanding, or improvement of practice.

2) *Background*. Through the abstract and a brief introduction, readers should be provided with sufficient background information to understand the problem being addressed.

3) *Purpose*. Whether stated generally or in greater detail—as is the case with hypotheses—the purpose of the paper should be clearly and unambiguously stated.

4) *Literature Review*. Research and scholarship should be linked to relevant literature and theory. The applicability of the research and the quality of the discussion are more important than the length of the review.

5) *Approach and Procedures*. The approach and procedures must be appropriate for addressing the stated purpose(s) and research question(s).

6) *Findings*. Findings must be presented and documented to show clear relationships to the purpose(s) and research question(s). Evidence needed to support conclusions must be clearly identified, including the presentation of statistics, charts, and graphs, use of quotations, observational data, references, and citations.

7) *Conclusions*. Conclusions and logical inferences should be pertinent, clearly drawn, and convincingly supported by evidence.

8) *Readability*. All manuscripts must be well-organized, well-written, and readable.

Book Reviews Book reviews are solicited by the Book Review editor. These reviews are not submitted for blind review but are reviewed and edited by the review editor. Decisions as to the books to be reviewed and who is asked to review them are also made by the Book Review editor. "Essay Reviews" of a series of books on selected topics are occasionally commissioned by the editors of *AEQ*. These essay reviews are not submitted for review but are handled by the editors themselves. If you have suggestions for books to be reviewed, or if you should like to review a book, contact: M. Carolyn Clark, Dept. of Education-HRD, 615 Harrington, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77845; Tel: 409-845-4086.

Disposition of Manuscripts Submitted

It may be helpful to potential contributors to *AEQ* to have a general profile of what happens to articles that are submitted for consideration in the journal. To this end, data from our first year as editors are provided in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows that we received 84 manuscripts as of August 31, 1994. Table 2 displays the breakdown of all 191 reviews that have been received thus far. Excluding the ten manuscripts that were "out of scope" and not sent out for review, plus two solicited "forum" response manuscripts, the average acceptance rate was 21.6 percent. The content of manuscripts, as well as the authorship, reflect our commitment to diversity within the field of adult education and our intention to encourage more articles focused with an international perspective. Methodologically, we continue to accept and publish manuscripts that represent quantitative, qualitative, historical, and philosophical perspectives. We have continued having a forum section. A recent issue included solicited responses to an original forum piece along with a final rebuttal from the original author in an innovative attempt to promote ongoing dialogue among our readership.

Reflections and Future Directions

While HRD topics have not appeared prominently in the various surveys of articles published in *AEQ*, the subject has nevertheless received attention within the pages of the journal. Examples of these include Karen Watkins' recent essay review on the definition of HRD and Blomberg's piece on cost-benefit analysis for training. This list might also include pieces which are less overtly HRD-specific but have had to do with adult education in workplace settings. Joyce Stalker's article on "Deconstructing the Myth" illustrates this kind of HRD related article. The introduction of *HRDQ* in the summer of 1990 as a publication outlet for researchers of HRD has probably siphoned off some undetermined portion of papers which formerly would have found a home in AEQ. For example, articles such as Vicki Marsick's piece on alternative paradigms for research in HRD, and Annie Brook's recent qualitative piece on the functioning of groups, would have had a good chance of being published in AEQ as well.

HRD and Adult Education With respect to the field of HRD research and theory, therefore, the distinctions between *AEQ* and *HRDQ* are becoming increasingly blurred. Our ruminations on this issue are merely speculative and grounded only in our perceptions and experiences as editors and researchers. One distinction, however, that may continue to be manifest between these two journals reflects the elements of the social change philosophy which has characterized the field of adult and continuing education for many years. This intellectual "climate" is manifest in topics published recently by *AEQ*. In addition to more traditional topics,

Table 1. Disposition of manuscripts for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln 7/1/93 - 8/31/94

Month Rec	Number of Ms. Rec	Out of Scope	Reject	Reject/ Encourage	Conditionally Accept
7/93	5	0	1	3	1
8/93	3	0	2	1	0
9/93	8	1	2	4	1
10/93	7	1	2	3	1
11/93	8	1	3	2	2
12/93	4	0	2	1	1
1/94	6	0	3	1	2
2/94	10	1	5	3	1
3/94	6	2	1	1	2
4/94	5	1	1	1	2*
5/94	7	2	3	1	1
6/94	7		1		1
7/94	4				
8/94	4	1			
Totals	84	10	26	21	13
Percent	100	11.9	43.3	35.0	21.6

* Solicited forum response manuscripts

Table 2. Breakdown of all reviews received.

	Reject	Reject/Encourage	Conditionally Accept	Total
Reviews	83	50	58	191
Percentage	43.5	26.2	30.3	100

such as articles on participation, program planning, and the like, the journal is also publishing articles grounded in post-modernist frameworks and increasingly questioning the assumptions inherent in the rationality of modernity; feminist critiques of research and practice in the field; and articles exploring and pushing the boundaries of transformative learning theory. Some of the HRD articles published recently by *AEQ* have reflected a more critical stance towards the field of HRD, are not as celebrating of its accomplishments, or have maintained a skeptical perspective on organizational and management philosophies. Of course, we have no way of knowing with any degree of certainty but it is possible that authors of articles that represent more "mainstream" HRD research feel more comfortable seeking publication in *HRDQ*. Authors who are more critical of the field may be looking to journals such as *AEQ* as an outlet for their scholarship.

Having said all that, however, "mainstream" HRD researchers are still invited and encouraged to submit their work for consideration in *AEQ*. Our position as editors (and hopefully speaking for our editorial board) is that articles are not considered primarily on their ideological persuasion but on their scholarship and contribution to research and theory in the field. The

journal seeks top quality manuscripts whatever their political or ideological hue as long as they fall within the scope of the journal. There are too few scholars conducting rigorous research or advancing theory within our fields. While we do not disclaim the political or ideological contexts in which all research and theory are conducted, these positions should not be used to make decisions on the merit of the scholarship. Our journals should be the place for dialogue and discussion around these differences, not a context for censorship or exclusion.

Trends in Research Methodologies The ascendence of qualitative research within the academic community is influencing editors and publishers of scholarly education journals. Criteria arising from and driven by particular methodological or epistemological approaches are being increasingly called into question. Reviewers and editors alike search for "common ground" amid this growing climate of methodological relativism. For example, as they struggle to find a voice to express their work, postmodernist scholars often tax our review editors and ourselves with their often complex and difficult language. Research designs completely foreign to traditional research are emerging within the qualitative arena and stress our abilities to effectively assess their soundness. Authors struggle to find new ways of presenting findings that are more consistent with the epistemological frameworks within which the research was conducted. Similar to the traditional art critic years ago who wondered whether modernist paintings represented art, we look at these new articles and ask, "Is this scholarship?" What constitutes "good scholarship" within these newer approaches is a question that needs to find space within our journals and we as editors need to begin convening symposia to further the conversation.

In addition to the difficult questions being posed by the nature of this research, reporting it is creating some very practical problems for editors and publishers. The substance of qualitative research studies is often difficult to communicate within the page limits traditionally imposed by editorial policies. Publication of qualitative studies sometimes results in fewer articles per issue, as allowance is made for the expanded nature of these articles. We are being pressured by these scholars to find room in our journals for their work or they will take their marbles and go elsewhere. Many of these papers represent excellent pieces of scholarship and we as editors do not want to lose them to other educational journals. But with the economic pressures that most journals are experiencing, how do we change to accommodate these newer form of research? One of the changes we at *AEQ* are considering is a move to a larger format. Traditionally, however, many scholar journals have been of a distinct size, often setting them off from other publications that are perceived to be more magazines than scholarly journals. Will moving to a larger format undermine the scholarly nature of our journals? We have several examples of serious publications that have shifted to this format. Again, however, this is an issue around which it would be helpful to generate discussion among editors, review boards, and readership.

Trends in Society Current trends within society are likely to influence the nature of the articles submitted to and considered for publication in *AEQ* and other journals dedicated to adult learning. Increasingly, emphasis in both policy and practice is being placed on the relationship of education and work. While education for work has always been a prominent aspect of the field of adult education, research and theory has largely focused on worker and labor education. Upheavals within labor and rapidly changing economic conditions in many countries throughout the world are likely to place more emphasis on this orientation, especially within adult populations. The challenge is to fully understand the complexity of these changes through careful research and theory and to avoid a narrowly focused vocational instrumentalism which is often reflected in the statements and documents of many policy-makers.

These changes are also creating demands for changes in the way higher education sees itself and does its business. We are being increasingly pressured to design educational programs and to conduct research which are more "relevant and meaningful" to the concerns of the "real world." Few of us would disagree that what we do should be relevant and meaningful to the needs of society. What is problematic, however, and should be a focus of our work as scholars, are the questions of who defines these needs, in whose interests are they being pursued, and what

do we mean by relevant and meaningful. For those of us responsible for preparing professionals within our respective fields, these questions represent a potential area of scholarly endeavor and should be reflected in the pages of our journals. Examples of these areas of "need" which occupy current public debate are welfare reform and the increasing emphasis on punishment rather than rehabilitation of criminal offenders. Both areas involve education and training of adults as a central element in the debate. Yet one would be hard pressed to find sustained dialogue on these issues within our journals.

Conclusion

In the past, *The Journal of Adult Education* has been an outlet for articles related to the training and education of adults for business and the workplace. Its successor, *AEQ*, has continued this tradition, with an increased emphasis and focus on research and theory. While the differences between this journal and *HRDQ* may be blurred relative to education and training for the workplace, *AEQ* is increasingly serving as a forum for scholars who take a critical perspective to HRD. The journal, however, continues to encourage all forms of scholarship related to HRD and no scholar should feel that the intellectual climate of *AEQ* is somehow inappropriate for their work.

The future of publication in adult education and HRD faces a number of formidable challenges, both within the scholarly community and from quantum changes within society. Editors, reviewers, and the higher education community in general need to sustain conversation and dialogue around these issues, particularly within the pages of scholarly journals. This symposium marks a good beginning in that direction.